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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 000938

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STATE FOR D (FRITZ), EAP/FO, EUR/RPM, AND EAP/ANP
NSC FOR VICTOR CHA
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PACOM FOR J01E/J2/J233/J5/SJFHQ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2016

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [FJ](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: GNZ HOSTS FIJI'S QARASE AND BAINIMARAMA FOR TALKS

REF: WELLINGTON 931

Classified By: DCM David J. Keegan. Reasons: E.O. 12958, 1.4
(b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: In a meeting with Bainimarama on November 27, New Zealand's Foreign Minister won his agreement to a meeting with Fiji's PM Qarase; PM Clark then called the PM and persuaded him to come for the meeting. The meeting will take place at New Zealand's Government House from 10:00 a.m. tomorrow, with no definite end time or predetermined agenda, although Bainimarama is scheduled to depart at 6:00 p.m. on a Suva-bound commercial flight. GNZ remains realistic about outcomes and continues its contingency planning should the coup proceed. FM Peters will attend the PIF Minister meeting in Sydney on December 1. End summary.

Kiwis Engineer a Meeting between Qarase and Bainimarama

2. (C) Embassy officers attended a second Diplomatic Corps briefing by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) officials regarding the evolving situation in Fiji (reftel) including a supplemental US-only briefing with Heather Riddell, Director, Pacific Division. While a Saturday, November 25 meeting between New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston and Commodore Bainimarama met with little result, in a second meeting November 27, Bainimarama agreed to meet in New Zealand with Fijian Prime Minister Qarase. New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark then called PM Qarase that evening to secure his agreement. Qarase will arrive at 8:00 p.m. today, November 28, on a Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) plane. The meeting between Qarase and Bainimarama is scheduled for tomorrow, November 29 at 10:00 a.m. at New Zealand's Government House. MFAT commented that both had accepted the Kiwi invitation "very quickly."

3. (C) The meeting will last as long as the participants want. MFAT says that there is no preset agenda for the meeting. Also, while FM Peters will attend the meeting, no decision has been made about whether or not New Zealand PM Clark will take part. She has said publicly that she is ready to participate. Her involvement might include handshakes or assistance in a tough negotiating moment. GNZ has indicated that it would like to see a press conference follow the

meeting. (FYI: We understand that Australia's FM Downer and FM Peters had a telcon this afternoon, but MFAT was not able to offer a readout. End FYI.)

¶4. (C) MFAT has heard, but has been unable to confirm, that Fiji Police Commissioner Hughes may attend the meeting. They are unsure whether Bainimarama would agree to Hughes' participation.

Anticipating outcomes

¶5. (SBU) GNZ is realistic about the possibility for success, knowing that nothing may be resolved. GNZ remains hopeful for a "best event" in which the two parties sign a written declaration. Heather Riddell, Director of the Pacific Division said, "This could be the shortest meeting ever, or it may do some good. It's hard to know."

¶6. (C) Bainimarama is scheduled to leave for Suva tomorrow on a 6:00 p.m. Air New Zealand flight. MFAT says that Bainimarama is anxious to depart because an ill daughter has been hospitalized in Fiji. Qarase's departure has not been set, but MFAT told us after the briefing that we should not read into that.

¶7. (U) GNZ sees this meeting, at a minimum, as setting the stage Friday's PIF Ministers meeting in Sydney, which Minister Peters will also attend.

Planning contingencies

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¶8. (U) GNZ continues its contingency planning, should the meeting fail and the coup plans proceed. Among other things, GNZ will break-off of military relations, and GNZ will seek regional and international responses, including the PIF meeting and the Commonwealth, and possibly the UN.

¶9. (C) MFAT is also looking into the evacuation of its 7,000 citizens in Fiji. They will rely on commercial flights as long as they are operating, and will charter flights if the commercial flights cease. Contradicting what they told us earlier, MFAT clarified that, because of threats received to certain High Commission staff over the weekend, non-essential personnel and family members have been moved out of Suva. The personnel may return as early as tomorrow; the families possibly not. But no one has been evacuated from Fiji.
McCormick